

agents have not been employed. Then only will it be possible to decide upon the value of the remedy in question.

12. "When the effects of any remedial agent have been thus established, we should compare the therapeutic with the physiological effects, produced by the same agent, and which have been equally well-established, to ascertain whether the one class is capable of being explained by the other. Thus, presuming that the alkalies cure the gravel, we should investigate the mode in which their effects in this case are to be explained.

"But how cautiously and discreetly is it necessary to proceed in drawing similar deductions! How carefully should we weigh the facts and examine on all sides our explanations, before attempting to generalize; being very certain that from the materials we possess, we are capable of forming abstract propositions; distrusting, especially, universal explanations; questions which have no limits; solutions that nothing can render inaccurate.

"An observation thus extended is not a pure or blind empiricism. It, on the contrary, requires the exact and rigorous exercise of our reasoning faculties upon well authenticated facts; and it repudiates all vague and diffuse reasoning, proceeding from analogy to analogy, and operating only upon the fictions of our imagination. It is to an observation thus extensive and practical, that we owe all that is most important in medical science."

D. F. C.

---

XVI. *Remarks on the Abracadabra of the Nineteenth Century; or on Dr. Samuel Hahnemann's Homœopathic Medicine, with particular reference to Dr. Constantine Hering's "Concise View of the Rise and Progress of Homœopathic Medicine."* By WILLIAM LEO-WOLF, M. D. New York, 1835. 8vo. pp. 272.

To compose a work of nearly three hundred pages, octavo, for the purpose of refuting the errors of homœopathy, is truly like breaking a fly upon the wheel.

That a tissue of absurdities, such as Hahnemann has attempted to palm upon the world under the sober guise of a rational system of pathology and therapeutics, should find a single advocate among men endowed with common sense, is most unquestionably a matter to be wondered at, and will, no doubt, constitute a curious subject for comment when the history of the medical opinions of the nineteenth century shall hereafter be written. But we doubt very much, whether any attempt to reason the advocates of the system out of their folly, will be productive of much good. Ridicule, and not argument, is the remedy best adapted to their case.

Contradicting, as it does, the best established facts in pathology, and subversive of our every day experience of the effects produced upon the organism by those agents which constitute the materia medica; nevertheless, the very novelty and mysticism, we had almost said the very absurdity of homœopathy, are well calculated to recommend it to minds that delight in whatever is marvellous, inexplicable, and obscure. Like many of the wild hypotheses that have preceded it, the present will have its day, before it is allowed to sink with them into oblivion.

That Hahnemann may be, to a certain extent, a man of talents—that some important truths may be contained in his writings, or that in certain chronic affections the practice he recommends may be even better calculated to effect a cure, than the polypharmaceutic and perturbative modes of treatment pursued by too many physicians, are points we have no desire to dispute. It is to

his system as a whole that we object—we deny the truth of its fundamental principles, and are prepared to prove that in many of its details it contradicts the plainest dictates of common sense—the most positive and best substantiated facts. We doubt whether the few grains of wheat to be culled from the system would compensate for the labour required to search for them amid the mountain of chaff with which they are enveloped.

A late French writer has presented in a few paragraphs an admirable expose of the homœopathic doctrines. We shall offer here a very free translation of some of his remarks.

There are three very distinct propositions embraced in homœopathy. 1. That diseases artificially produced, cause immediately to cease, radically and permanently, those spontaneous diseases which are analogous to them in character. 2. That the homœopathic remedies have the property of inducing at the will of those who know how to employ them, artificial diseases of a very distinct and determinate character. 3. That remedies are efficacious, although attenuated to a degree which appears impossible, (Hahnemann's own words,) to vulgar physicians, whose minds embrace only gross and material ideas.

These propositions comprise the whole of the homœopathic doctrine—a doctrine which, like every other, however wild and ridiculous, is presented by its author as the general expression of results derived from experience. It may be very seriously objected to the homœopathists, that they promise and assert too much. They have, in fact, been so positive as to the accordance of their hypothesis with experience, and the absolute certainty of its results, that it is precisely the test of experience that cause those allusions, with which they have for a period amused all Germany, every day to vanish.

Other medical sectaries have been more wise, or at least more prudent—expecting their system to fail in some cases, they have left ample room for the occurrence of circumstances altogether accidental and independent of their will—they admit freely that the concurrence of certain facts may place bounds to the good effects of their remedial measures; while on the contrary, the homœopathists assert positively that their system is infallible; that the cures produced by it are equally certain, prompt, radical, and durable.

As an example of their therapeutics, Hahnemann assures us, no doubt with the best faith in the world, that a single drop of *drosera*, in the thirtieth degree of dilution, shook at each degree twenty times, endangered the life of an infant labouring under whooping-cough, to which it was administered; but when the same was only shook twice at each grade of solution, a portion of sugar of the size of a poppy seed moistened with it, was sufficient to obtain an easy and prompt cure of the disease, (*Organon*, 339.) But this is not all—a person endowed with the greatest sensibility, may take, we are told, several grains of gold leaf without experiencing the least effect in consequence; but from the trituration for one hour of one grain of gold, with one hundred grains of sugar of milk, there results a preparation which has already many virtues. Take one grain of this, and triturate it again for another hour with one hundred grains of the sugar of milk, and thus continue to act, until each grain of the preparation shall contain only a quadrillionth part of a grain of gold, and we have then, says Hahnemann, a remedy in which the medicinal virtue of the gold is so developed, that it is only necessary to take one grain of it, and enclose it in a

bottle, and cause it to be respired for a few minutes by a melancholic in whom the disgust of life has produced a tendency to suicide, and in the course of an hour the patient will be emancipated from the influence of his evil spirit, and experience a renewed desire for living.

They who oppose homœopathy should, instead of saying to its advocates, if a single drop of a remedy diluted to a homœopathic extent is capable of retaining still its virtues, then were we to throw one ounce of bark into the lake of Geneva, this would be sufficient to medicate all the inhabitants of the surrounding country; in place, we say, of presenting such an objection to the doctrine, which Hahnemann has really taken up very seriously, and has shown that the terms of the comparison are inexact, they should introduce the homœopathist to a suicidal monomaniac, or present to him a child affected with whooping-cough, and beg him to cure either immediately and radically by means of his homœopathic fractions. In a word, they should say to him, you who are every hour referring to experience in support of your theory, you have now the opportunity to convince us fully of its truth by the test of experience—we abide the result!

In the work before us, Dr. Wolf has exposed in detail the leading inconsistencies and absurdities of homœopathy—displaying in a very happy manner the folly of many of the propositions it embraces, and treating with just severity the trickery to which the apparent success that has heretofore attended it, is mainly to be attributed. To those who desire to obtain with little trouble a knowledge of the leading peculiarities of the doctrine, the exposition of Dr. Wolf will be peculiarly acceptable.

These remarks relate to the work only so far, however, as it professes to be a critique upon the views of the homœopathists; were we to enter into a review of the medical notions occasionally thrown out by the writer, we fear we should be obliged to treat them with nearly as much severity as we have treated those of Hahnemann.

D. F. C.

---

XVII. *Instituzioni Patologiche di*, FRANCESCO LUIGI FANZAGO, Professore di Patologia Generale e Speciale, di Medicina Forense, di Pubblica Igiene Nella R. Università di Padova. Tradotte da Luigi Michelotti Dottore in Medicina. Seconda Edizione. Two volumes, 12mo. pp. 205—166. Livorno, 1824. *The Pathological Institutes of F. L. FANZAGO, &c.*

Among the several works on general pathology which have been presented to the public within the last twelve or fifteen years, by the physicians of Italy, that of Professor Fanzago holds a very distinguished rank. And we conceive deservedly so. The author has, it is true, confined his remarks almost exclusively to the general consideration of disease, without reference to the particular portion of the organism in which it occurs, or the important modifications in its various phenomena resulting from the structure, functions, and connexions of the organ principally affected; he has nevertheless, notwithstanding the difficulties which are inseparable from the investigation of morbid action in the abstract, and its tendency to the introduction of hypothetical reasoning, presented a series of highly important pathological deductions, many of which are the more interesting from their intimate connexion with physiology, and their direct practical application.